

Castlemaine Naturalist

November 2017

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Monthly newsletter of the
Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc.



Sugar Glider – photo NY, Muckleford forest 15-10-17

Wednesday Wildflower Wander - 4th October The Monk

On account of some unfortunate weather this turned out to be the third and last of the Wednesday walks. On a pleasant, sunny afternoon Richard led a group of members up the hill, one of our favourite wildflower locations in spring. Only a week before I had photographed a small bunch of Castlemaine Spider Orchids with fresh flowers. (see last edition). When we located them, the flowers had already shrivelled. However, someone with a sharp eye found a single Brown-clubbed Spider Orchid in prime condition.

Still, there was lots to see, and Richard compiled the list below of the plants found to be flowering.

Wurmbea dioica
Caladenia fuscata
 phaeoclavia
 clavescens
Diuris pardina
Glossodia major
Luzula meridionalis
Acacia acinacea
 paradoxa
Craspedia variabilis
Daviesia ulicifolia
Dillwynia cinerascens
Platylobium montanum
Microseris lanceolata
Ozothamnus obcordatus

Common Early Nancy
Dusky Fingers
Brown-clubbed Spider Orchid
Castlemaine Spider Orchid
Leopard Orchid
Wax-lip Orchid
Common Wood-rush
Gold-dust Wattle
Hedge Wattle
Billy Buttons
Gorse Bitter-pea
Grey Parrot-pea
Hill Flat-pea
Yam Daisy
Grey Everlasting

Xerochrysum viscosum
Drosera auriculata
Goodenia blackiana
Grevillea alpina
Pimelea linifolia
Rhytidosporum procumbens
Stackhousia monogyna
Tetratheca ciliata
Gonocarpus tetragynus
Leucopogon virgatus
Philotheca verrucosa
Ranunculus sessiliflorus

Sticky Everlasting
 Tall Sundew
 Black's Goodenia
 Downy Grevillea
 Slender Rice-flower
 White Marianth
 Creamy candles
 Pink Bells
 Common Raspwort
 Common Beard-heath
 Fairy Wax-flower
 Annual Buttercup



The Monk; October 4.

Left – The bees were buzzing around this densely flowered Downy Grevillea

Right – the lonely Brown-clubbed Spider Orchid

- photos Noel Young

November Field Trip

The excursion on Saturday 11th November will be to the Castlemaine Botanic Gardens, where Margaret Panter will show us how to identify Chilean Needlegrass, a perennial Weed of National Significance that is difficult to control - and which we do not want to spread within the CBG, or into our home gardens.

We will also be shown how to remove and dispose of this Stipoid tussock grass - giving us the opportunity to assist the CBG in reducing this threat. Please bring along a weeding tool (miniature mattock, weed lifter or sturdy serrated (old) table knife), and perhaps a kneeling mat or knee pads. You may find a magnifying lens useful.

September Excursion to Muckleford Forest October 14th

Richard Piesse (photos by Noel Young)

Plants in flower included:

Arthropodium strictum

Burchardia umbellata

Caladenia fuscata

cucullata

gracilis

Calochilus robertsonii

Dianella revoluta

Glossodia major

Lomandra multiflora

Thelymitra pauciflora

Thysanotus patersonii

Acacia acinacea

Acacia genistifolia

Boronia anemonifolia

Brachyloma daphnoides

Craspedia variabilis

Daviesia ulicifolia

Daviesia leptophylla

Dillwynia cinerascens

ramosissima

Gonocarpus tetragynus

Grevillea alpina

Hibbertia exutiacies

Leptospermum myrsinoides

Leucopogon virgatus

Microseris lanceolata

Ozothamnus obcordatus

Philotheca verrucosa

Pimelea linifolia

Pultenaea largiflorens

pedunculata

Rhytidosporum procumbens

Senecio phelleus

Stackhousia monogyna

Tetratheca ciliata

Wahlenbergia stricta

Calytrix tetragona

Chocolate lily

Milkmaids

Dusky Fingers

Hood Orchid

Musky hood

Purple Beard-orchid

Black-anther Flax-lily

Wax-lip Orchid

Many-flowered Mat-rush

Slender Sun-orchid

Twining Fringe-lily

Gold dust Wattle

Spreading Wattle

Sticky Boronia

Daphne Heath

Billy Buttons

Gorse Bitter-pea

Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea

Grey Parrot-pea

Bushy Parrot-pea

Common Raspwort

Downy Grevillea

Spiky Guinea-flower

Heath Tea-tree

Common Beard-heath

Yam Daisy

Grey Everlasting

Fairy Wax-flower

Slender Rice-flower

Twiggy Bush-pea

Matted Bush-pea

White Marianth

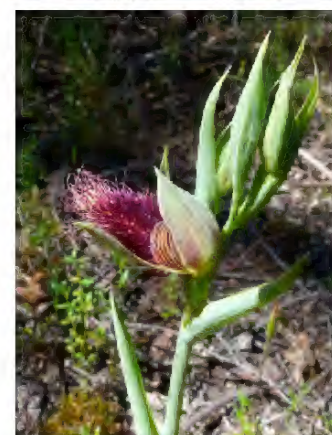
Slender Groundsel

Creamy candles

Pink Bells

Tall Bluebell

Common Fringe-myrtle



Photos: from top right;

Grey Parrot-pea, Purple Beard-orchid, Black-anther Flax-lily, Grey Everlasting.

Overleaf; members inspecting a Boronia enclosure near the Red, White and Blue Track.



Photo Observations

Peter Turner

The Wednesday Wildflower Walk on October 11th was cancelled due to rain. After making sure that no-one came to the Octopus, Richard, Rosemary and I drove to the planned site, Whitegum Track east of Chewton, where Richard had seen extensive areas of Hoary Sunray everlastings, *Leucochrysum albicans*, during a walk that morning - when the sun was out and the Sunrays were open. We stopped just over the railway bridge, not far from the highway, and were amazed how these cheerful flowers (even when part closed under a grey, drizzly sky) were spread out in all directions. Well worth checking out.



Pied Oystercatchers

pondering a small fish on the beach at Port Fairy. They decided after some poking and prodding that this is not their type of food, and walked off. We returned the fish to the sea, hoping it might survive this ordeal.



Readers' Specimens Nov 1940

George Broadway

Your correspondent unexpectedly found himself in hospital for a couple of weeks, followed by a lengthy period of recuperation, so this column has not appeared for a couple of months. Now however I want to see what specimens were sent to "Wildlife" magazine for identification in November 1940.

Insects

Toorak: Looks like a very attenuated spider at first sight but is actually a Longhorn beetle, *Phorocantha recurva*. One of the woodboring beetles.

Mordialloc : Black Aphis (Discussed in article on p.7)

Mincha: The insects in your box were Crusader Bugs *Mictis profana*. So called because of the distinct cross on the back. I have had trouble with these pests because they tend to suck the juices from the tender growing tips of my trees, causing them to wither away. The other specimen was an immature plant bug with undeveloped wings.

Heathmont: A little hairy native bee which burrows in the ground instead of making combs in hollow trees. Your bees were still "half-seas over" when they reached this office, they were apparently intoxicated on the nectar of certain flowers. Common name "Burrowing Bees". Scientific name – *paracolletes*.

Middle Park: Plant roots, probably grass, passing through the body of a cockchafer grub. Apparently uncommon, I have never seen it before. The grub was probably dead and its body provided some nitrogenous fertilizer for the plant.

Mt Dandenong: Your grotesque insect is a long-horned grasshopper *Paragrillacris*. Frequently found in firewood it feeds on wood and does not form swarms.

Caulfield: A small species of dragonfly *Synthemipsis*. Does not have a common name (yet)

Korumburra: Chrysalis of Cabbage White Butterfly. Remember they were not so common in 1940. They were first recorded in Melbourne in March 1939

Dudin W.A. Silver-spot Swift Moth. The caterpillar bores holes in living trees.

Wolseley S.A. Your moth is one of the Drinker Moths *Pinara*. The cleverly camouflaged caterpillars feed on gum leaves. Your butterfly is not a cabbage white but a female of the Common Migrant *Catopsilia pyranthe*. The larva feeds on species of Cassia and is a rare visitor to South Australia.

Roma Qld. Stick Insect or Phasma. Feeds on vegetation but never in sufficient numbers to be a garden problem.

Darlington: Not a cocoon but the home of the Ribbed Case-moth.

Bowen Qld. Your mosquito is quite harmless apart from the discomfort of a bite. The *Anopheles* which carries malaria stands on its head when it bites, whereas the *Culex* stands in the horizontal position.

Spiders etc.

Horsham: The bird-dropping spider with its egg sacs (Frequently mentioned in this column)

Windsor: Your specimens are millipedes. Centipedes are exclusively carnivorous,

are flattened and have one pair of legs to each segment. Millipedes are vegetarian and may do damage in the garden..

Mincha: A true trapdoor spider, female. Distinguished by the heavy build, yellowish spots under the front part of the abdomen and two little projecting "tails" at the hind end.

Creswick: One of the true trapdoor spiders but at this stage does not have a specific name. It is not *Atrax*, the funnel-web genus.

Miscellaneous

Brisbane Qld. Shells of the little Violet Snail, a marine species with a very lightweight shell which enables it to float. Shoals of them are sometimes seen many miles from land.

Wahroonga NSW. A large female spider infested with tiny passengers. These were not young spiders but mites, external parasites. They have 8 legs, a small head and sucking mouth parts.

King Island: Eggs and young of White-lined Skink Lizard.

Darwin: There was no need for your description of the reptile. There are no alligators in Australia. Your specimen was The Johnston River crocodile, *Crocodylus johnstonii*.

Bacchus Marsh: White-striped Bat, *Nictinomus australis*. Stripes on the undersurface of the body near the attachment of the wing membranes.

Photographs of several of the above specimens have appeared in earlier editions.

Observations

– Denis Hurley at home in Merrifield St.

September

Red-browed Finches nesting in Callistemon.

A female Spotted Jezebel *Delias aganippo* seen near the house.

A neighbour has two Tawny Frogmouth roosting within 15 metres of the house for many months.

October – birds seen about the house

Two White-browed Scrubwrens

Four Grey Fantails.

Black Ducks nested on the verandah (ignoring the box generously provided by the proprietor) Ten ducklings ensued, and Lady Duck took them to a well vegetated dam about 200 metres away.

Six Spotted Pardalotes at the bird bath.

A pair of Crimson Rosellas - female not fully coloured – took up nesting in a nest box under the carport roof. I could hear eggs rolling about as she leaves.

Bird Quiz

Nigel Harland

The bird featured last month was the Grey Currawong. Normally first identified by its call and it is found generally just in pairs. Quite unlike its cousin, the Pied Currawong, which has a much easier identified call and is found in gregarious flocks.

We very rarely see the Pied Currawongs in Sutton Grange, whereas the Grey Currawong is quite common. As you travel further north, the amount of white on the Grey Currawong diminishes until it is almost totally grey.

The bird for next month is shown at right.



Our Guest Speaker for the November meeting, Ian Higgins will speak on the problem of some foreign invasive weeds

“The Americans are coming!”

What are they?—the seven species currently known (or prohibited in the case of Mexican Feather-grass) from Victoria

Where are they? i.e., where known to exist in Victoria and in our district.

Why are they a problem? Their behaviour and the threat posed to natural values

How can I identify them? Identification characteristics, especially how to distinguish them from native grasses

How are they spreading? Dispersion strategies and human involvement.

How to manage them? Duration of seed viability in soil, herbicides, etc.

Ian invites you to bring along specimens on the night of suspect grasses (or any you want identified).

Breaking News!

Our suspicions that our CBG Powerful Owls may be nesting nearby was correct. On 28th October Peter Turner sent this picture to the Castlemaine Naturalist showing two young on parade - snoring happily and accompanied by one of the proud parents.



Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the club

Castlemaine Field Naturalists

Coming events

Fri November 10 meeting: speaker IAN HIGGINS – weeds, including Stipoids such as Chilean Needlegrass

Sat November 11 field trip: Stipoid weeds in the CBG with Marg Panter

Monday November 20: Roadside clean-up

9 a.m. start at cnr. Golf Links road on Pyrenees Highway – organiser Geoff Harris
Takes 1 – 2 hrs., Wear sturdy footwear and gloves. Garbage bags and reflective vests will be supplied. Please note KABC rules prohibit anyone under 16 from working on the roadside.

Sat/Sun. December 2,3: Annual Bird Count – contact Chris Timewell

Fri December 8 meeting: Members night and break-up

VISITORS ARE WELCOME AT CLUB ACTIVITIES

General meetings - (second Friday of each month, except January) are held in the Uniting Church (UCA) Hall (enter from Lyttleton St.) at 7.30 pm.

Field Trips - (Saturday following the general meeting) leave from the car park opposite Castle Motel, Duke Street at 1.30pm sharp unless stated otherwise. BYO morning and/or afternoon tea. Outdoor excursions are likely to be cancelled in extreme weather conditions. There are NO excursions on total fire ban days.

Business meetings - third Thursday of each month, except December, at George Broadways, 24a Greenhill Ave., at 6.00 pm. Members are invited to attend.

Club website (Web master: Chris Timewell) - <http://castlemainefnc.wordpress.com/>

Subscriptions for 2017

Ordinary membership: Single \$30, Family \$40

Pensioner or student: Single \$25, Family \$30

Subscription includes postage of the monthly newsletter, Castlemaine Naturalist

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